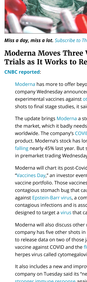
03/27/14 Bio Pirates

Moderna Moves Three Vaccines Into Final Stage Trials as It Works to Rebound From COVID Slump » More

The Defender's Big Pharma Watch delivers the latest headlines related to pharmaceutical companies and their products, including vaccines, drugs, and medical devices and treatments. The views expressed in the news excerpts from other news sources do not necessarily reflect the views of The Defender. Our goal is to provide readers with breaking news that affects human health and the environment.

By The Defender Staff



Miss a day, miss a lot. Subscribe to The Defender's Top News of the Day. It's free.

Moderna Moves Three Vaccines Into Final Stage Trials as It Works to Rebound From COVID Slump

CNBC reported:

Moderna has more to offer beyond its COVID vaccine. The biotech company Wednesday announced positive clinical trial data on three experimental vaccines against other viruses. The company is moving those shots to final-stage studies, it said.

The update brings Moderna a step closer to having multiple products on the market, which it badly needs amid plunging demand for COVID shots worldwide. The company's COVID jab is its only commercially available product. Moderna's stock has long been tied to that vaccine, with shares falling nearly 40% last year. But shares of the company rose more than 3% in premarket trading Wednesday after the announcements.

Moderna will chart its post-Covid future Wednesday during its fifth annual "Vaccines Day," an investor event in Boston focused on the company's vaccine portfolio. Those vaccines include a shot against norovirus, a highly contagious stomach bug that causes diarrhea and vomiting; a vaccine against Epstein-Barr virus, a common herpes virus that can cause contagious infectious and is associated with some cancers; and a shot designed to target a virus that causes shingles and chickenpox.

Moderna will also discuss other updates across its vaccine business. The company plans to share results in late-stage clinical trials and said it expects to release data on two of those jabs this year. That includes its combination vaccine against COVID and the flu and a shot against another common herpes virus called cytomegalovirus, or CMV.

It also includes a new and improved version of Moderna's COVID shot. The company on Tuesday said its "next-generation" COVID booster triggered a stronger immune response against the virus than its current vaccine on the market in a late-stage clinical trial.

Drug Overdoses Have Reached Record High, per Latest CDC Report: 'Grim Statistics'

Fox News reported:

Drug overdoses reached a new high last year in the U.S., according to a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Nearly 108,000 people died from drug overdoses in 2022, the agency said. This was a marginal increase from 2021's 107,669 people died of drug overdoses. Overdoses are still the leading cause of death for adults in the country, largely driven by fentanyl, a synthetic opioid drug.

"When it comes to the intractable problem of substance abuse, one thing is evidently clear: America has an appetite for drugs, and not enough is being done about it," Dr. David Campbell, clinical and program director of Recover Together in Bend, Oregon, who was not involved in the CDC report, told Fox News Digital.

"It should come as no surprise, then, that overdoses have emerged as one of the top-10 causes of non-genetic deaths and a leading contributor to the first drop in life expectancy in the United States in over two decades."

Pharmacies Take Appeal of $650 Million Opioid Award to Ohio Top Court

Reuters reported:

Pharmacy operators CVS (CVS.N), Walmart (WMT.N) and Walgreens (WBA.O) on Tuesday urged Ohio's highest court to conclude they cannot be held liable for fueling an opioid epidemic in two of the state's counties that won a $650.9 million judgment.

A jury in Cleveland in October 2021 concluded an oversupply of addictive pain pills and the diversion of those opioids to the black market created a public nuisance in the counties and that the companies helped cause it. The counties had alleged the companies did so by disregarding "red flags" and failing to ensure that prescriptions pharmacies were filling were valid. The companies denied wrongdoing.

U.S. District Judge Dan Polster, who is overseeing the federal multidistrict litigation over the opioid epidemic, afterward ordered CVS, Walmart and Walgreens to pay a combined $650.9 million to help the two counties address, or abate, the harms caused by the companies' conduct.

CVS, Walmart and Walgreens subsequently agreed to a collective $13.8 billion to settle the nationwide lawsuits against them by states and local governments. But the two Ohio counties did not settle and defended their verdict on appeal. The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in September asked the Ohio Supreme Court to review the matter, saying it raised "novel and unresolved questions" of state law.

DNA Test Says It Can Predict Opioid Addiction Risk. Skeptics Aren't so Sure.

The Washington Post reported:

Using a swab inside the cheek and a sophisticated computer algorithm, a DNA test recently approved by federal regulators promises to assess the genetic risk of opioid addiction. The test's maker says results give doctors and patients a crucial tool when considering the use of the very pain pills that ignited the nation's opioid crisis.

But as the company, SOLVD Health, prepares to roll out AvertD in the coming months, skeptics remain unconvinced. They worry that patients shown to have a low risk of addiction may feel emboldened to pop pain pills — then get hooked. Or that doctors will deny painkillers to patients errantly deemed at elevated risk.

Above all, some geneticists and public health experts say AvertD relies on unsound science. The Food and Drug Administration approved the AvertD cheek-swab test in December, despite an agency committee of experts voting overwhelmingly, 11-2, against recommending approval.

Andrew Kolodny, an opioid researcher at Brandeis University, blasted the test as a "sham."

"You've got an algorithmic profiteering by industry and federal agencies that feel they're under the gun to do something about the problem, even if that something is counterproductive," said Kolodny, president of Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing, which aims to educate prescribers and patients.

Pharmaceutical Company Amgen Sues Colorado Over Price-Setting Prescription Drug Board

The Colorado Sun reported:

Amgen, the multinational pharmaceutical company that makes the blockbuster arthritis drug Enbrel, has sued Colorado over a state board's efforts to possibly cap the price of the drug.

In a lawsuit filed Friday in U.S. District Court in Denver, Amgen argues that the actions of Colorado's Prescription Drug Affordability Board are unconstitutional because they conflict with federal laws and because they violate rights to due process. The company is seeking not just to overturn the board's recent decisions about Enbrel but also to strike down major parts of the law creating the board.

Colorado lawmakers, backed by Gov. Jared Polis, created the Prescription Drug Affordability Board, or PDAB, in 2021 with the goal of lowering prescription costs. The board has the ability after extensive review to set so-called upper payment limits — basically, price caps — on drugs it deems unaffordable.

Its first reviews of prescription drugs brought outcries from patient groups worried that price caps would cause their needed drugs to be pulled from the market in Colorado. But, last month, the board voted unanimously to declare Enbrel unaffordable, setting in motion a roughly six-month process to weigh whether to become the first state to place a price cap on prescription medication.

Amgen reported making about $3.7 billion from Enbrel sales worldwide in the 2023 fiscal year, down 10% from the year before.

2 New Lyme Disease Vaccines Could Mean End of Debilitating Illness

New York Post reported:

A vaccine for Lyme disease is not currently available, but two scientific initiatives to fight the condition are showing promising results, with one soon to be rolled out. Memphis-based U.S. Biologic aims to solve the epidemic by going straight to the source and vaccinating mice via food pellets, and studies have shown the method holds promise.

Meanwhile, Pfizer and French biotech company Valneva have developed a vaccine candidate — VLA15 — that's already in Phase 3 human trials, the CDC said.

Researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Helsinki also recently determined that human sweat contains a protein that inhibits the growth of a bacterium that causes the disease.

"This protein may provide some protection from Lyme disease, and we think there are real implications here for a preventative and possibly a therapeutic based on this protein," Michal Caspi Tal, a principal research scientist in MIT's Department of Biological Engineering and one of the senior study authors, said in a statement.

Novo Nordisk Boosts Cardiovascular Pipeline With $1.1 Billion Purchase of Cardior Pharmaceuticals

The Wall Street Journal reported:

Novo Nordisk is buying Cardior Pharmaceuticals for up to 1.03 billion euros ($1.11 billion) as the Wegovy maker moves to strengthen its pipeline of drugs to treat cardiovascular disease and expand into areas outside of its core diabetes and weight-loss market.

The Danish pharmaceutical giant is enjoying blockbuster success for its Wegovy and Ozempic obesity and diabetes treatments, which aren't only proving highly effective at regulating blood sugar and helping patients lose weight but are also yielding extra health benefits such as cutting the risk of stroke and heart attacks and slowing the progression of kidney disease.

Viking Therapeutics' Weight-Loss Tablet Shows Promise in Small Study

Reuters reported:

Viking Therapeutics' (VKTX.O) experimental tablet reduced weight by as much as 3.3% when tested in volunteers enrolled in a small early-stage trial, meeting Wall Street expectations and sending the company's shares up 15% in premarket trading on Tuesday.

Popular market leaders from Eli Lilly (LLY.N) and Novo Nordisk (NOVOb.CO) are administered under the skin, with companies also testing oral versions that they hope will offer patients a more convenient option.

FDA Approves Merck's Drug for Rare, Deadly Lung Condition

CNBC reported:

The Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday approved a drug from Merck designed to treat a progressive and life-threatening lung condition in a win for both the drugmaker and for patients suffering from the rare disease.

The agency greenlighted the therapy, which will be marketed as Winrevair, for patients with pulmonary arterial hypertension. The decision is a big step for the roughly 40,000 people in the U.S. living with that disease because Winrevair is the first drug to target the root cause of the condition. Other available medicines only help manage symptoms.

It will priced at $14,000 per vial before insurance, a Merck spokesperson said in a statement. But the company has a program that offers eligible patients the vial-of-pocket costs and copay cards.

The approval is critical for Merck, which is working to diversify its revenue stream as its top-selling cancer immunotherapy Keytruda approaches a loss of market exclusivity in 2028.

AbbVie to Bolster Immunity Illness Drug Pipeline With Landos Deal

Reuters reported:

AbbVie (ABBV.N) will buy drug developer Landos Biopharma (LABP.O) for up to $212 million as the Humira-maker aims to expand its pipeline of medicines to treat immune system-related illnesses, the companies said on Monday.

Landos is currently conducting a mid-stage study of its lead experimental drug NX-13 in a type of an inflammatory bowel disease called ulcerative colitis.

AbbVie's blockbuster drug Rinvoq is approved to treat the disease while the company has also sought the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's approval for its other key drug Skyrizi.

Subscribe to The Defender – It's Free!

First Name | Last Name | E-mail | SIGN UP

SUGGEST A CORRECTION

The Defender Staff
The Defender is the news and views website for Children's Health Defense. Our mission is to end corruption to save democracy. Our content exposes the corporations, elected officials, government agencies and individuals who put profits before people and planet.

Sign up for free news and updates from Children's Health Defense. CHD focuses on legal strategies to defend the health of our children and obtain justice for those injured. We can't do it without your support.

Children's Health Defense Comment Policy
We welcome relevant and respectful comments. Off-topic comments may be removed.
Please read our Comment Policy before commenting.
Got It
3 Comments
Login
Join the discussion...
LOG IN WITH
OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS
Name
Share
Sort Newest Oldest
Vinit Nagpal
a month ago
Buy Pharma is a big brownpaper manufacturer against population, nothing else.
Reply
Sheena G.
a month ago • Post Nagpal
Congress needs to do away with immunity for vaccine manufacturers. They cut corners on clinical trials and safety. They don't operate in good faith.
Reply
Sheena G.
a month ago
My family had a reverse last year. We were pretty miserable for a few days. But I read about it and there are many different strains so having it doesn't necessarily confer immunity. I wonder how the vaccine will handle all the different strains. I'm suspicious and doubt I will get it. In fact, I pretty much have decided at 63 that I won't get anymore vaccines. I have decided to add natural supplements to my diet that reduce inflammation, because that seems to be the major culprit in pretty much all diseases.
Reply
Subscribe
Privacy
Do Not Sell My Data

Latest News

Did the WHO Waive Down Its 'Pandemic Treaty' Text Because Trump Says 'It Disappears'?
'A Dangerous Vaccine for a Nothing Disease': U.S. Is Stockpiling Mpox Shots
WHO, Media Down Up Fear of Bird Flu Spreading to Humans
MORE NEWS

Latest Views

How What You Eat May Change Your Risk of Alzheimer's Genes — and Affect Their Health
'Corporate Greed' Is Behind Soaring Food Prices, PTC Report Says
Australia's Public Broadcaster Partners With 'Trusted News Initiative' to 'Protect Public' From 'Misinformation'
MORE VIEWS

Get FREE News & Updates!

First Name...
Last Name...
Email...
SIGN UP

Get Text Alerts

Sign up for breaking news from The Defender

123-456-7890

REQUIRED: Phone number must be a standard 10-digit format; CLEARED99 or 123-456-7890

THE DEFENDER IS AVAILABLE IN:

ENGLISH | SPANISH | PORTUGUESE | GERMAN | ITALIAN | FRENCH

Children's Health Defense

Children's Health Defense® is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Our mission is to end childhood health epidemics by working aggressively to eliminate harmful exposures, hold those responsible accountable and establish safeguards to prevent future harm. We fight corruption, mass surveillance and censorship and promote policies people as well as advocate for worldwide rights to health freedom and bodily autonomy.

TAKE ACTION

DONATE | FREE SIGN-UP | BECOME A MEMBER

Donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. EIN #26-0338504

Children's Health Defense | Legal Disclaimer | Terms of Use | Privacy Policy | Donate | About Us | Work for CHD | Contact | Social | Membership Level: A-TRC

© 2018 - 2024 Children's Health Defense® | All Rights Reserved | Sitemap